DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 104 HE 028 242

AUTHOR	El-Khawas, Elaine
TITLE	Senior Faculty in Academe: Active, Committed to the Teaching Role.
INSTITUTION	American Council on Education, Washington, D.C. Div. of Policy Analysis and Research.
PUB DATE	91
NOTE	14p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, N.W., Washington, DC 20036 (single copy, $10; annual subscription, $58; 10 percent member discount).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Statistical Data (110)
JOURNAL CIT	Research Briefs; v2 n5 1991
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Rank (Professional); *Aging in Academia; *College Faculty; Colleges; Faculty Publishing; Full Time Faculty; Higher Education; Job Satisfaction; *Middle Aged Adults; Productivity; *Profiles; Tables (Data); Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Characteristics; Teaching (Occupation); Tenure; Two Year Colleges; Work Attitudes; Young Old Adults

ABSTRACT

This research brief offers a profile of full-time college and university faculty who are 50 years of age or older, paying particular attention to their teaching activities and attitudes toward teaching. Data are presented on: the proportion of the professoriate that are senior faculty; changes in the age profile of college faculty between 1973 and 1989; composition by gender, race, and academic rank; career milestones such as tenure and publication activity; regular activities of senior faculty; differences in activities of faculty at two-year and four-year institutions; attitudes toward teaching and research; satisfaction with their work; and plans for the future. The profile suggests that today's faculty include large numbers of older faculty, most of whom have been at the same institution for 20 or more years. Most senior faculty are productive, contributing members of the academic professions, who are particularly active and interested in teaching undergraduates. Senior faculty are predominantly white and male and are likely to continue in their positions for another decade or two. Implications of the data are outlined. Contains 4 end notes, descriptions of 4 data sources, and 17 references. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 381 104

RESEARCH BRIEFS Volume 2, Number 5 • 1991

Division of Policy Analysis and Research
American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.

Senior Faculty in Academe: Active, Committed to the Teaching Role

Elaine El-Khawas

HE028242

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Div of Policy Analysis & Research, American Council on Education
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

RESEARCH BRIEFS Volume 2, Number 5 • 1991

Division of Policy Analysis and Research
American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.

Senior Faculty in Academe: Active, Committed to the Teaching Role

Elaine El-Khawas

Today, senior members of the professoriate (defined here as full-time faculty who are fifty years of age or older),[1] make up a sizeable and significant presence, accounting for close to half of all college faculty. Almost all hold tenure or, where tenure systems do not exist, hold long-term contracts and seniority rights. Most have held the same faculty appointments for two decades or more; many have worked together as colleagues on the same campus for decades.

This research brief offers a profile of this important segment of today's college and university faculty. We pay particular attention to their teaching activities and attitudes toward teaching. Data are taken from three sources:[2] The 1989 survey of faculty conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA; the Carnegie Foundation's 1989 survey of faculty; and, to offer a historical comparison, the 1972-73 American Council on Education (ACE) survey of college faculty. This profile clearly suggests that most senior faculty are productive, contributing members of the academic professions, who are particularly active in teaching of undergraduates, an endeavor that senior faculty value.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Older faculty do not significantly differ from other faculty in their commitment to teaching undergraduates and in the nature of their current teaching responsibilities. If anything, older faculty show somewhat greater interest than others in teaching. Younger faculty, in contrast, may be more committed to research.

- College administrators and external audiences alike should be aware that today's faculty include large numbers of older faculty, most of whom have been at the same institution for twenty or more years. In the same way that the large size of the "baby boom" generation affects population trends and needs in the U.S., this distinctive clustering of older faculty affects faculty outlooks and interests, and should be borne in mind when changes in academic policies and programs are discussed.

- Similarly, campus initiatives for faculty renewal should reflect likely differences among faculty in "life-cycle perspective" if such initiatives are to be attractive to a broader segment of senior faculty than at present.

- This group of older faculty will eventually lead to a "bulge" in retirements in the future, but currently, most "older" faculty are in their fifties and can be expected to remain in academe for another decade. Most older faculty are likely to retire at conventional ages, although half are amenable to early retirement.

- Because this large group of older faculty is predominantly white and male, college and university administrators must recognize likely discrepancies in the generational and cultural experiences of these faculty and those of students and younger faculty. Another implication is that, because many of these faculty will stay in their positions for another decade or more, many campuses will have limited opportunities to move women and people of color out of part-time and junior positions.

Elaine El-Khawas is Vice President for Policy Analysis and Research at the American Council on Education.

- At four-year institutions, older faculty are as active in research as their younger colleagues. More than half could be considered quite active, reporting regular publications and other research activity. University administrators would be well advised to recognize and support this level of research activity among their senior faculty.

- Senior faculty at two-year institutions appear to have fewer opportunities for a change of pace than do their counterparts at four-year institutions. Greater opportunities for professional development or leave, or for experience in academic administration, would help these faculty keep pace with new developments in their field and in higher education generally.

- Because relatively few faculty at two-year institutions are active in research, attention to faculty research performance should always make a distinction between faculty activity at two- and at four-year institutions. Differences between faculty at universities and those at other four-year institutions should also be kept in mind. Studies that report combined data can be misleading, given the substantial differences between these sectors.

- Many older faculty reported feeling some stress over the time pressures associated with their profession. At two-year colleges, pressure primarily comes from a heavy teaching load whereas, at four-year institutions, there are the double pressures of teaching and research.

Senior Faculty: An Important Presence in Higher Education

Senior Faculty make up an unusually large share of today's professoriate.

- Senior faculty—those who are 50 years and older —accounted for at least 40 percent of all full-time faculty in the HERI 1989 survey (table 1).

- In a 1987 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) survey, covering both full-time and part-time faculty, 59 percent were 45 years of age or older.

- Knowledgeable observers believe that in 1991-92 faculty over 50 probably comprise nearly half of all faculty.

This age profile contrasts sharply with the demographic profile of college faculty in 1972-73. On average, faculty at that time were much younger (ACE):

- In 1972-73, only 28 percent of full-time faculty were over 50 years of age.

- The percentage of faculty over 50 years of age in 1972-73 included:

  — 32 percent of faculty at universities;

  — 26 percent of faculty at other four-year institutions; and

  — 25 percent of faculty at two-year colleges.

In 1989, most senior faculty were 50 to 59 years old, and thus could be expected to continue in academe another ten to fifteen years, or more (HERI).

- In 1989, 76 percent of senior faculty at two-year institutions were between 50 and 59 years of age.

- At four-year institutions, 70 percent of senior faculty were between 50 and 59 years of age.

Most senior faculty have held appointments at their institution for two or more decades (table 2, figure 1).

- At four-year institutions, 60 percent of senior faculty had been at their present institution for twenty or more years.

- At two-year institutions, substantial longevity also appeared: 43 percent of senior faculty had been at the same institution for twenty or more years.

- This contrasts sharply with 1972-73, when only about one in ten senior faculty had been at the same institution for twenty or more years; in 1972-73, more than 60 percent of senior faculty had been at their present institution for less than ten years.

Senior faculty generally parallel the distribution by race and gender of all college faculty in 1989, although with slightly fewer women and minorities than for the faculty at large (table 2).

- At four-year institutions, 93 percent of senior faculty are white, and 80 percent are male. Three percent of the senior faculty are Asian American, two percent are African American, one percent are Hispanic, and 0.5 percent are Native American (Carnegie).

- At two-year institutions, 94 percent of senior faculty are white, and 63 percent are male. Three percent of the senior faculty are African American, one percent are Asian American, one percent are Hispanic, with another one percent reported as "other" (Carnegie).

- These figures reflect little change from 1972-73, when minorities comprised 2 percent of senior faculty at two-year institutions and 5 percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions. Notably, because these figures include data from historically black institutions, the figures for predominantly white institutions are probably lower than what is reported here.

- Two-year institutions have a significantly higher percentage of women among their senior faculty (37 percent) than do four-year institutions (with 20 percent women among their senior faculty).

Table 1

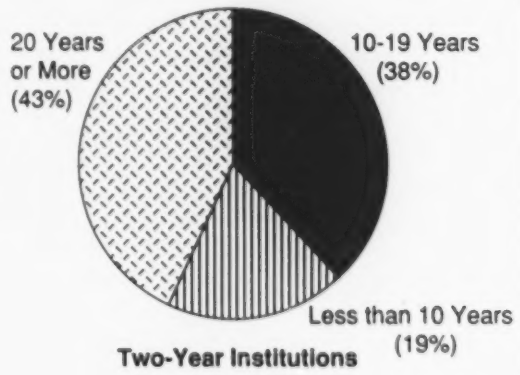
Changes in the Age Profile of College Faculty* (Percentages)

	Teaching Faculty			
	at Two-Year Institutions		at Four-Year Institutions	
	1973	1989	1973	1989
Less than 40 years	37	19	36	25
40 - 49 years	36	41	31	35
50 - 59 years	20	30	23	28
60 years or more	5	10	10	12
	100	100	100	100

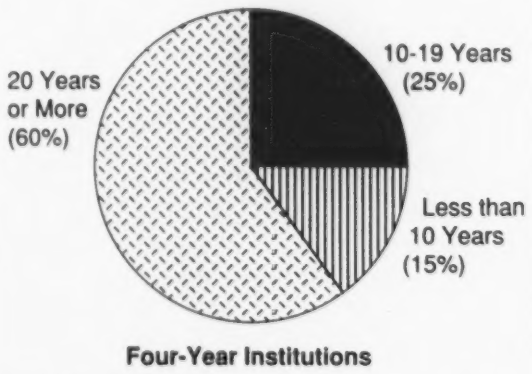
* All full-time faculty with instructional duties.
Sources: ACE 1972-73 survey; HERI survey, 1989.

Figure 1

Senior Faculty:
Years Employed at this Institution



Two-Year Institutions



Four-Year Institutions

Source: HERI survey, 1989.

Table 2

Senior Faculty: A Profile (Percentages)

	at Two-Year Institutions		at Four-Year Institutions	
	1973	1989	1973	1989
Years at this institution:				
30 years or more	3	2	1	10
20 - 29 years	8	41	8	50
10 - 19 years	25	38	26	25
Less than 10 years	64	19	65	15
	100	100	100	100
Percent, female (Carnegie)	26	37	20	20
Percent, nonwhite (Carnegie)	2	6	5	7
Percent, U.S. citizen (Carnegie)	99	99	98	97
Percent tenured (Carnegie)	84	82	88	88
Academic rank:				
Professor	14	45	58	64
Associate professor	15	18	24	26
Assistant professor	7	5	14	7
Lecturer or instructor	27	21	4	2
No rank, other (Carnegie)	37	10	1	1
Percent that published:				
articles in professional journals	27	42	73	84
chapters in edited works	—	10	—	45
books, monographs or manuals	31	39	57	60
Percent that have received an award for outstanding teaching	—	37	—	36
Percent that have held a position in academic administration	—	38	—	57

Source: HERI survey, 1989, unless noted otherwise.

- The figures on the representation of women reflect progress for two-year institutions since 1972-73, when women comprised 26 percent of senior faculty, and no progress for four-year institutions, which had 20 percent women among their senior faculty both in 1972-73 and in 1989.

Career Milestones

As would be expected, almost all senior faculty hold tenure or similar status (table 2).

- At four-year institutions, 88 percent of senior faculty hold tenure.
- At two-year institutions, 82 percent of senior faculty hold either tenure or an equivalent status that offers seniority rights.

Most senior faculty hold the title of "full professor" (table 2).

- At four-year institutions, 64 percent of senior faculty are full professors (26 percent are still at the associate-professor level).
- The distribution by rank in 1989 is roughly similar to the 1972-73 data for four-year institutions, suggesting that, even as the number of long-term faculty has increased, these institutions have held back on granting full-professor rank.
- At two-year institutions, 45 percent of senior faculty hold the rank of full professor. Two in ten are at the associate-professor level; and another two in ten are lecturers or instructors (a rank that rarely appears for senior faculty at four-year institutions).
- For two-year institutions, differences in rank between 1972-73 and 1989 are substantial, although this may be attributed to differences in the two surveys.

Publication activity is reported by almost all senior faculty at four-year institutions, but by four in ten senior faculty at two-year institutions (table 2).

- At four-year institutions, 84 percent of senior faculty have published articles in professional journals, 60 percent have prepared books, monographs or manuals, and 45 percent have written chapters for edited works. Notably, today's senior faculty at four-year institutions have more publications than did their counterparts in 1972-73 (ACE).
- At two-year institutions, where publication activity is given less emphasis, 42 percent of the senior faculty nevertheless reported having published articles, and 39 percent have prepared books, monographs or manuals. At these institutions, too, a higher percentage had published articles or books in 1989 than in 1972-73 (27 percent).[3]

More than one-third of senior faculty received an award for outstanding teaching at some time during their academic career.

- At both two-year and four-year institutions, senior faculty more often reported such awards (37 percent and 36 percent, respectively) than did faculty in general (32 percent and 30 percent, respectively [HERI]).

A large proportion of senior faculty, especially at four-year institutions, have taken on administrative responsibilities at some time during their academic career.

- At four-year institutions, 57 percent of senior faculty have held an academic administrative position, usually as department chair, dean or associate dean. This compares to 41 percent of all faculty at four-year institutions (HERI).
- At two-year institutions, 38 percent of senior faculty have held such administrative positions. Thirty-one percent of all two-year college faculty have held such positions (HERI).

Regular Activities of Senior Faculty

Senior faculty regularly participate in two core activities: classroom teaching and student advising. At four-year institutions, most senior faculty also spend time doing research and other scholarly activities (table 3).

- Among senior faculty at four-year institutions, 61 percent regularly taught 9 hours or more each week; 23 percent taught classes for 13 hours or more each week (figure 2).
- A much higher percentage of senior faculty at two-year institutions do such teaching: 93 percent regularly taught 9 hours or more each week; 78 percent taught classes for 13 hours or more each week.

This teaching load is comparable to what was reported by all faculty at these institutions (HERI). It is also quite comparable to what senior faculty reported in 1972-73 (ACE):

- In 1972-73, 90 percent of senior faculty at two-year institutions and 51 percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions had teaching loads of 9 hours a week or more.

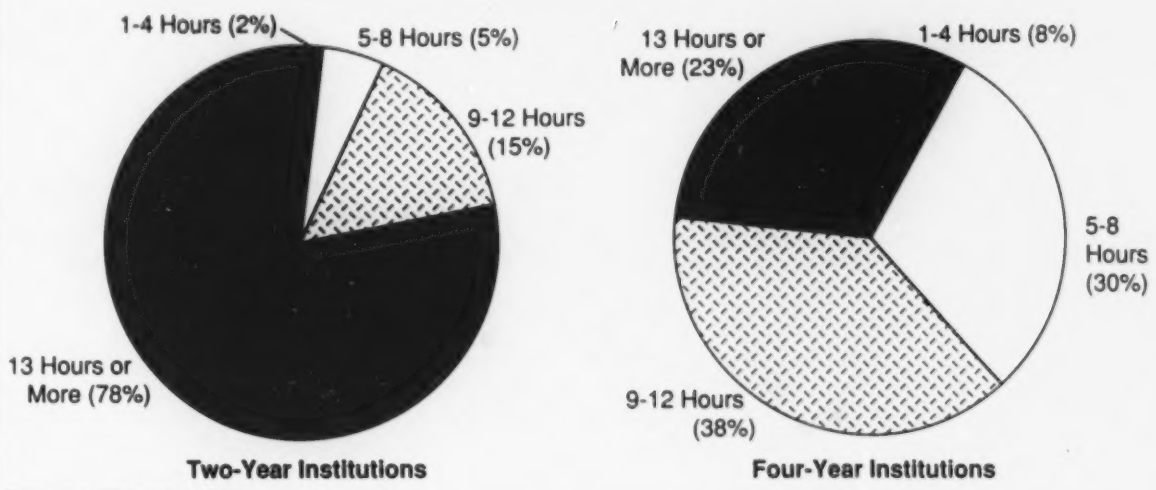
Faculty themselves reported little change in their teaching load.

- Only 20 percent of senior faculty, at both two-year and four-year institutions, reported that their teaching load was heavier than it was five years ago.
- Similarly, 11 percent at two-year institutions and 19 percent at four-year institutions reported a lighter teaching load compared to five years ago.
- These estimates on changes in teaching load are comparable to what was reported by all faculty at these institutions (Carnegie).

As with teaching, almost all senior faculty (9 in 10) have responsibilities for advising students. Some have a significant advisory role (table 3).

Figure 2

Senior Faculty: Hours per Week of Regularly Scheduled Teaching



Source: HERI survey, 1989.

- At four-year institutions, 55 percent of senior faculty spent between one and four hours each week advising students. Another 42 percent spent five or more hours each week in advising.
- A similar pattern exists at two-year institutions: most senior faculty advised students for one to four hours each week, but a good many others were involved in advising for five or more hours a week.
- Senior faculty were just as likely as faculty in general to be involved in student advising (HERI). This is comparable to what senior faculty reported in 1972-73 (ACE).

At four-year institutions, most senior faculty had some form of scholarly activity underway in 1989. Much smaller proportions of senior faculty at two-year institutions reported such scholarly activity (table 3)[4].

- At four-year institutions, 87 percent of senior faculty reported that they spent some time each week on research and scholarly writing. However, 30 percent reported only one to four hours of such activity each week.
- At two-year institutions, 49 percent of senior faculty spent some time each week on research and scholarly writing, although most (32 percent) spent only one to four hours each week on such activity.
- Notably, these figures on the scholarly activity of senior faculty are the same as for all faculty at both types of institutions (HERI).

At four-year institutions, a majority of senior faculty (59 percent) had one or more publications in the past two years (table 3).

- This includes 14 percent who had five or more publications in the past two years, as well as another 45 percent with one to four publications.
- At two-year institutions, 17 percent of senior faculty reported having some publications in the past two years; most did not.
- These publication levels are roughly comparable to faculty in general; for all faculty at four-year institutions, 65 percent had some publications in the past two years; for all faculty at two-year institutions, 18 percent had some recent publications (HERI).

This is a higher level of publication activity than was reported in 1972-73 (ACE).

- At four-year institutions especially, today's senior faculty more often report having recent publications. In 1989, 59 percent of senior faculty had recently published, compared to 49 percent in 1972-73.
- At two-year institutions, in 1989, 17 percent of the senior faculty had recently published, compared to twelve percent in 1972-73.

The Carnegie Foundation's 1989 survey reported even higher levels of recent publication activity than did the HERI survey, reported here. In the Carnegie survey, 65 percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions had recently published and 21 percent of senior faculty at two-year institutions had recently published.

Taken together then, the data in table 3 suggest that more than half of the senior faculty at four-year institutions are quite active with research and scholarship:

Table 3

Regular Activities of Senior Faculty
(Percentages)

	at Two-Year Institutions	at Four-Year Institutions
Percent teaching:		
21 hours or more	20	3
13 - 20 hours	58	20
9 - 12 hours	15	38
5 - 8 hours	5	30
1 - 4 hours	2	8
None	—	—
Percent advising students for:		
9 hours or more	9	12
5 - 8 hours	30	30
1 - 4 hours	58	55
None	3	2
Compared to five years ago, percent whose teaching load is:		
Heavier	18	20
About the same	70	58
Lighter	11	19
Was not teaching five years ago (Carnegie)	1	3
Percent active in research and writing for:		
13 hours or more	2	25
5 - 12 hours	15	32
1 - 4 hours	32	30
None	51	13
In the past two years, percent with published writings:		
Five or more	1	14
One to four	16	45
None	83	40
Percent at professional activities away from campus for:		
11 days or more	7	21
5 - 10 days	21	30
1 - 4 days	51	36
None	21	13
In the past two years, percent who:		
Did paid consulting	33	50
Had funds for research	10	44
Participated in a faculty development program	75	46
Developed a new course	60	67
Taught a general education course	46	48
Taught an interdisciplinary course	25	37
Taught an honors course	12	2
Percent who worked with students on a research project:	32	69

Source: HERI 1989 survey, unless noted otherwise.

- Fifty-nine percent had articles or other works published in the past two years. Fourteen percent had five or more published writings in the past two years.
- Fifty-seven percent reported spending five hours or more each week on research activity, including 25 percent who spent 13 hours or more.
- Fifty percent reported having served as a paid consultant in the past two years.
- Forty-four percent reported having funds for research in the past two years.

This level of scholarship is close to the level of activity for faculty in general (HERI). However, senior faculty are somewhat less likely than other faculty to have research funds. Forty-four percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions reported having research funds, compared to 51 percent of all faculty at these institutions.

It still must be noted, however, that more than 40 percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions had not published in the last two years. Undoubtedly there are differences by institutional type in the proportion of senior faculty who have not published recently.

Many senior faculty regularly work with students on research activities (table 3):

- At four-year institutions, most senior faculty (69 percent) said that they were working with students on some type of research project (sometimes including supervision of the student's own research).
- At two-year institutions, 32 percent of senior faculty said they were working with students on some research project.

It is also clear that senior faculty are as likely as other faculty to be involved with new approaches to their subject matter (table 3):

- About two-thirds of senior faculty had developed a new course in the past two years.
- About half of senior faculty had taught a general education course in the past two years.
- Thirty-seven percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions had taught an interdisciplinary course in the past two years, as did twenty-five percent of senior faculty at two-year institutions.
- Twenty-two percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions had taught an honors course in the past two years, as did twelve percent of senior faculty at two-year colleges.

On all of these items, senior faculty were as active as faculty in general (HERI).

A large proportion of senior faculty also reported that they have recently participated in a faculty development program at their institution (table 3).

- At four-year institutions, 46 percent of senior faculty had participated in a faculty development program within the past two years, close to the level of participation of all faculty (53 percent, HERI).
- At two-year institutions, as many as 75 percent of senior faculty had participated in a faculty development program within the past two years, equal to what was reported for all faculty (HERI).

Most senior faculty regularly attend professional meetings away from campus, but typically for only a few days each year. This parallels the experience of faculty in general (HERI).

- At four-year institutions, 36 percent of senior faculty devoted one to four days and another 30 percent devoted five to ten days each year for professional activities. Thirteen percent reported no days away for such activity (table 3).
- At two-year institutions, 51 percent of senior faculty reported one to four days away each year on professional activities, and another 21 percent reported five to ten days away. Twenty-one percent reported no days away (table 3).

Attitudes Toward Teaching and Research

Today's senior faculty value their teaching activities, give teaching primacy among their interests, and enjoy informal interaction with students (table 4). In all of these areas, their views are much the same as those of all faculty.

- Most senior faculty (8 in 10) reported that they enjoy opportunities for informal interaction with students.
- When asked about their professional goals, senior faculty were almost unanimous in saying it was essential or very important to be a good teacher.
- Much smaller proportions of senior faculty — 61 percent at four-year institutions and only 23 percent at two-year institutions—said it was essential or very important to them to engage in research.
- The majority of senior faculty reported that their primary interests lie in teaching rather than in research. At four-year institutions, 74 percent of senior faculty chose teaching over research; only 26 percent reported that their primary interests were in research. Notably, more senior faculty expressed this emphasis on teaching than did faculty in general (74 percent, versus 66 percent for all faculty, HERI).

Most senior faculty show interest in their discipline and would still be a college professor if they had to make the choice again (table 4, figure 3).

- About three-quarters of senior faculty agreed that there are exciting developments taking place in their discipline.
- About eight in ten senior faculty would still be a college professor if they were beginning their career again. About half said they "definitely" would do so; another three in ten "probably" would do so.

Although more than 70 percent of senior faculty are satisfied with their work overall, they also found several aspects of their work not satisfying (table 4, figure 3):

- The autonomy and independence of faculty life are key points of satisfaction: more than eight in ten senior faculty reported that they were satisfied with their autonomy and independence.
- However, only about two-thirds of the senior faculty were satisfied with their working conditions, and only about half were satisfied with their salary and benefits.
- Teaching load is another area in which only about half of the senior faculty felt satisfied.
- Similarly, only about half were satisfied with the opportunities they had for scholarly pursuits.

This suggests that a good number of senior faculty prefer more scholarly activity than they have, and that their teaching responsibilities are heavier than they would like.

Reports by senior faculty about other sources of stress offer further perspectives:

- More than 70 percent of senior faculty (78 percent at four-year institutions and 71 percent at two-year institutions) reported feeling stress related to time pressures in the past two years (table 4).

Table 4

Senior Faculty: Attitudes Toward Teaching (Percentages)

	at Two-Year Institutions	at Four-Year Institutions
Percent reporting it is essential or very important to:		
Be a good teacher	99	98
Engage in outside activities	52	47
Engage in research	23	61
Percent reporting their primary interests are:		
Very heavily in teaching	73	35
Both areas, but leaning toward teaching	23	39
Both areas, but leaning toward research	4	23
Very heavily in research	—	3
Percent reporting they enjoy informal interaction with students (Carnegie)	84	82
Percent agreeing there are exciting developments in their discipline (Carnegie)	73	75
If beginning again, percent who would still be a college professor:		
Definitely Yes	45	49
Probably Yes	34	31
Not Sure	10	11
No	11	9
Percent satisfied with their:		
Autonomy & independence	80	83
Working conditions	66	69
Teaching load	51	55
Salary and benefits	55	46
Opportunities for scholarly pursuits	46	50
Overall job satisfaction	76	70
Percent reporting stress in the past two years from:		
Time pressures	71	78
Teaching load	59	56
Demands for research or publishing	10	50
Fund-raising expectations	11	20

Source: HERI survey, 1989, unless noted otherwise.

- About 6 in 10 senior faculty reported stress related to their teaching load.
- Expectations related to research or publishing were a source of stress for 50 percent of senior faculty at four-year institutions, but for only 10 percent of those at two-year institutions.

Notably, faculty in general reported consistently higher proportions of stress in these areas than did senior faculty (HERI). It appears that, although time pressures are a source of stress for many faculty, senior faculty have somewhat less stress than others over this aspect of the faculty role.

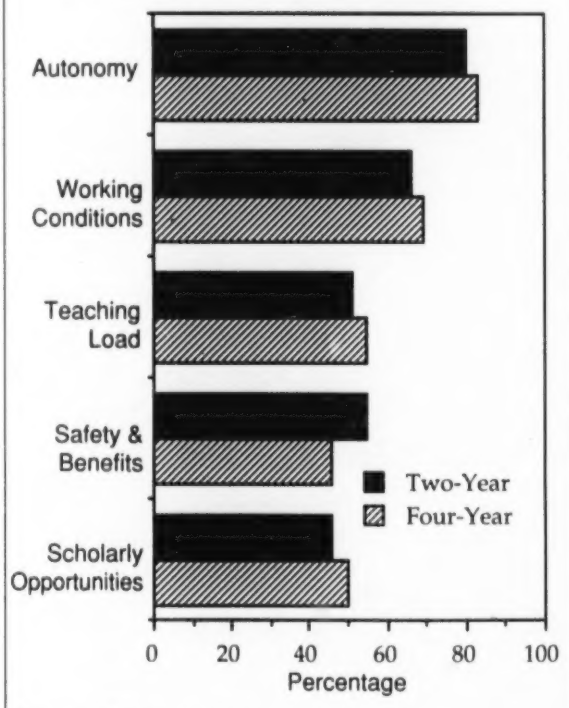
Senior Faculty: Looking Ahead

The majority of today's senior faculty expect to retire from full-time employment on or about age 65 (table 5).

- Two-thirds of senior faculty expect to retire between age 60 and 67.
- Relatively few—14 percent at two-year institutions and only 6 percent at four-year institutions—set their likely retirement before age 60.

Figure 3

Senior Faculty: Percentage Satisfied with Their Work



Source: HERI survey, 1989.

- Conversely, some senior faculty—18 percent at two-year institutions and 27 percent at four-year institution —expect to retire at age 68 or later. Only two percent of senior faculty expected to retire after age 70.

These retirement expectations indicate that most senior faculty today intend to follow a conventional pattern of retirement. However, it should be noted that close to half of them would take early retirement if an attractive option were offered.

Interestingly, faculty in general are more likely to predict unconventional retirement patterns, including both greater interest by some in post-70 retirement and greater interest by others in retirement before age 60 (Carnegie):

- Among all faculty at four-year institutions, 21 percent predicted retirement at age 71 or later, while only 6 percent predicted that they would retire before reaching age 60.
- Among all faculty at two-year institutions, 11 percent predicted retirement at age 71 or later, while 22 percent predicted that they would retire before reaching age 60.

Although almost all senior faculty expected to retire from full-time employment by age 70, a substantial proportion (32 percent at four-year institutions and twenty five percent at two-year institutions) still planned to work beyond age 70 (table 5). These responses, taken from the HERI survey, may reflect a desire to keep up some level of professional activity.

Senior faculty generally view retirement in positive terms.

- About eight in ten said they "look forward" to an enjoyable retirement.
- About six in ten senior faculty at four-year institutions plan to do some research and writing while retired; about four in ten senior faculty at two-year institutions plan some writing.
- Only two in ten senior faculty expected problems of boredom while retired.

However, some ambivalence about the terms of retirement offered by their institution is reflected in the views of senior faculty.

- Relatively few senior faculty—23 percent at four-year institutions and 10 percent at two-year institution —felt that their institution used early retirement offers to force out less productive faculty.
- However, it is disturbing that only about half of senior faculty at four-year institutions (57 percent) agreed that their institution provided the conditions for a dignified retirement. About two-thirds of senior faculty at two-year institutions took this view. A substantial number of senior faculty, then, do not think their institutions offer terms for a dignified retirement.

Table 5

Senior Faculty: Looking Ahead (Percentages)

	at Two-Year Institutions	at Four-Year Institutions
Percent who are likely to retire at:		
71 years and older	2	2
68 - 70 years of age	16	25
65 - 67 years of age	35	39
60 - 64 years of age	33	27
Less than 60 years	14	6
(Carnegie)		
Percent who:		
Look forward to an enjoyable retirement	81	76
Plan research and writing while retired	41	63
Expect problems of boredom while retired	20	19
(Carnegie)		
Percent who would take early retirement, if offered:	48	43
(Carnegie)		
Percent who plan to work beyond age 70:	25	32
Percent agreeing that early retirement's purpose is to force out less productive faculty:	10	23
(Carnegie)		
Percent agreeing that their institution provides the conditions for retirement with dignity:	69	57
(Carnegie)		

Source: HERI survey, 1989, unless noted otherwise.

CONCLUSION

This profile of senior faculty at colleges and universities should dispel some myths about this important group. They do not appear to be "burnt out" or otherwise disillusioned about their work. Rather, the large majority express interest in new developments in their discipline, and most regularly have engaged in some form of scholarly activity. Most are satisfied with their work overall, and would still choose to be a college professor if they were beginning their careers again.

Nor are senior faculty likely to avoid students or shirk their teaching responsibilities. Their teaching loads match those of other faculty at their institutions, and most report they are teaching as much now as they did five years ago. Most also report that they enjoy informal interaction with undergraduate students and show a strong preference for teaching over research.

The idea that senior faculty never publish is also contradicted by this profile. At four-year institutions, about six in ten senior faculty have had articles published within the past two years. Their publication record exceeds that of senior faculty in 1972-73. It is true that most senior faculty at two-year institutions are not involved with publication activity; as a result, data that are based on combined statistics are very misleading, and significantly understate the considerable research and scholarly contributions made by senior faculty at four-year institutions.

Further, older faculty are generally not on the verge of retiring. Most senior faculty are in their fifties and are likely to continue in their positions for another decade or two. Most cite conventional expectations for retirement around age 65. However, with an uncertain economy and in the likely absence of mandatory retirement provisions, actual retirement ages and terms may be more varied as these faculty make firmer plans. It seems that senior faculty currently feel they will be ready to retire from full-time employment around age 65, but a good number wish to continue working in some capacity after that time.

Given their active involvement in teaching and scholarly activity, it is not surprising that most senior faculty report experiencing some stress over the time pressures associated with being a college professor. Senior faculty are as likely as others to be teaching and to have recently struggled with developing a new course, for example. Senior faculty are also as likely to have published recently, which requires finding concentrated time for assembling information and writing up results while also juggling teaching and other responsibilities.

Notably, although most senior faculty publish regularly, they seem to have less access than younger faculty to institutional research funds. Closer examination of the sources of this difference is warranted. Are institutional expectations and incentives skewed toward younger faculty?

Finally, this research brief underscores the necessity of recognizing the often substantial differences between the teaching faculty of two- and four-year institutions. At two-year colleges, the teaching load is much heavier, with limited expectations for research or scholarly activity. At four-year institutions, the teaching load is not as great, offset by increased research expectations. Similarly, the recent report by HERI staff also demonstrates that faculty at universities face quite different situations than do faculty at other four-year institutions (Astin, Korn, and Dey, 1991). Discussions about college faculty need to recognize these differences and avoid the use of combined data that can be misleading.

ENDNOTES

1. Alternative definitions of "senior" faculty might have been used, for example, a cutoff of age 40 or age 45 or a focus on those faculty who are tenured and who hold full-professor rank. The definition used in this research brief allows a focus on a specific "generation" of faculty.
2. For each of these sources (the 1989 HERI survey, the 1989 Carnegie survey, and the 1972-73 ACE survey), a published report is available that offers a detailed portrait of faculty in general. These reports, as well as unpublished tabulations from these data sources, form the basis for comparisons made here. References in the text (i.e., HERI, Carnegie, ACE) indicate the source of data for each topic discussed. Because these surveys mainly were limited to full-time teaching faculty, this research brief also has this limitation, although attention to the growing numbers of part-time faculty is much needed.
3. It should be recognized that most of today's faculty at two-year institutions do not hold a Ph.D. or equivalent degree. In the HERI survey, 18 percent of two-year faculty held a Ph.D. or equivalent degree; for 61 percent, the master's degree was their highest earned degree. In contrast, at four-year institutions, 75 percent of faculty held a Ph.D. or equivalent degree.
4. The HERI survey asked faculty about time spent in research or scholarly **writing**; the slight variation in wording in Carnegie survey, which asked about time spent in research or scholarly **activity**, could be expected to elicit responses related to professional activity (recitals, performances, presentations, etc.) that do not involve writing.

RESOURCES

The following are among the major national data bases on college and university faculty.

1989 Survey of Faculty, conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), at the University of California at Los Angeles.

This is a national survey of full-time faculty at 392 colleges and universities across the country, conducted in the fall and winter of 1989-90. The survey covers full-time faculty who spend at least part of their time teaching undergraduates.

The study's normative report, *The American College Teacher*, is based on responses from 35,478 faculty, statistically weighted to be representative of all full-time faculty in the U.S. This report is the source for references in this research brief to all faculty, when followed by the notation, HERI.

For more information, see: Alexander W. Astin, William S. Korn, and Eric L. Dey, *The American College Teacher: National Norms for the 1989-90 HERI Faculty Survey* (Los Angeles: UCLA, Higher Education Research Institute,1991.)

1989 Carnegie Survey of Faculty, conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton, New Jersey.

This is a national survey of full-time faculty at a sample of 306 colleges and universities, conducted during the early months of 1989. Data are based on 5,450 respondents.

Two reports have been issued with study findings, including a general report, titled *The Condition of the Professoriate*, that focuses on attitudes and opinions of college faculty, and a technical report that includes detailed tabulations for all items in the survey questionnaire. The latter is the source for references in this research brief to all faculty, when followed by the notation, Carnegie.

For more information, see: *The Condition of the Professoriate: Attitudes and Trends, 1989* (Princeton, N.J.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989) and *1989 National Survey of Faculty: Technical Report and Detailed Tabulations* (Princeton, N.J.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, no date given).

1972-73 ACE Survey of Faculty, conducted by the American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.

This is a national survey of full-time faculty at 301 colleges and universities, conducted during the first six months of 1973. Data are based on 42,345 respondents who were active faculty with teaching responsibilities in 1972-73. The survey report is the source for references in this research brief to all faculty in 1972-73 (shown by the notation, ACE); also, unpublished tabulations prepared for this research brief from the 1972-73 survey provide the source for all references to senior faculty in 1972-73.

For more information, see: Alan E. Bayer, *Teaching Faculty in Academe: 1972-73* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1973).

1988 NCES Survey of Faculty, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C.

This is a national survey of both full-time and part-time instructional faculty at 449 colleges and universities. Basic findings for 7,408 respondents are available in a report titled *Faculty in Higher Education Institutions, 1988*. This survey is not a source for this research brief because NCES has restricted access to the survey data.

For more information, see: *Faculty in Higher Education Institutions, 1988: Contractor Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1990).

Some Key Publications On College Faculty

Achenbaum, W. Andrew. "Intergenerational Relations in Higher Education," *Research Dialogues* 30. New York: Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, July 1991.

Astin, Alexander W., William S. Korn, and Eric L. Dey. *The American College Teacher: National Norms for the 1989 HERI Faculty Survey*. Los Angeles: UCLA, Higher Education Research Institute, 1991.

Baldwin, Roger G. ed. *Incentives for Faculty Vitality*. New Directions for Higher Education, 51. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.

Bayer, Alan E. *Teaching Faculty in Academe: 1972-73*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1973.

Blackburn, Robert T. and Janet H. Lawrence. "Aging and Quality of Faculty Performance." *Review of Educational Research* 23 (fall 1986): 265-90.

Bowen, Howard R. and Jack H. Schuster. *American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Bowen, William G. and Julie Ann Sosa. *Prospects for Faculty in the Arts and Sciences: A Study of Factors Affecting Demand and Supply, 1987 to 2012*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Boyer, Ernest L. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990.

Caffarella, Rosemary S., et al. "Mid-Career Faculty: Refocusing the Perspective," *The Review of Higher Education* 12: 4 (Summer 1989): 403-10.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. *The Condition of the Professoriate: Attitudes and Trends, 1989*. Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. *1989 National Survey of Faculty: Technical Report and Detailed Tabulations*. Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, no date given.

Clark, Burton R. *The Academic Life: Small Worlds, Different Worlds*. Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987.

Clark, Shirley M. and Darrell R. Lewis, eds. *Faculty Vitality and Institutional Productivity*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1985.

Finkelstein, Martin J. *The American Academic Profession: A Synthesis of Social Science Inquiry Since World War II*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1984.

"Community Colleges: A Sector with a Clear Purpose," in *Change*, 22 (May/June 1990): 23-6.

Jacobs, Frederic. "Expectations of and by Faculty: An Overview for the 1990s," in: Larry W. Jones and Franz Nowotny, ed. *An Agenda for the New Decade*. New Directions for Higher Education 70. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990: 43-50.

Schuster, Jack H. "Faculty Issues in the 1990s: New Realities, New Opportunities," in: Larry W. Jones and Franz Nowotny, eds., *An Agenda for the New Decade*. New Directions for Higher Education, 70. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990: 33-41.

American Council on Education Executive Committee, 1991

Robert L. Albright, President, Johnson C. Smith University, *Chair*

Hoke L. Smith, President, Towson State University, *Vice Chair*

Stanley O. Ikenberry, President, University of Illinois, *Immediate Past Chair*

Marilyn Schlack, President, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, *Secretary*

D. Bruce Johnstone, Chancellor, State University of New York

Johnnetta B. Cole, President, Spelman College

Thomas Gonzales, President, Front Range Community College

Robert H. Atwell, American Council on Education, *President*

The ACE Research Briefs Series

The Division of Policy Analysis and Research at the American Council on Education publishes the ACE Research Brief Series, a collection of short papers exploring timely and pertinent issues in higher education. Current topics include trends in retention data and practices, academic collective bargaining, and international comparisons of higher education expenditures and participation. The series is published eight times a year and is available for $55 for one year, $100 for two years, or $140 for three years. ACE members receive a 10 percent discount.

Elaine El-Khawas, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research

Cecilia Ottinger, Editor, Research Briefs Series